



Maxwell/Gunter AFB

# Retiree News

News concerning U. S. Military retirees in the Montgomery, AL area



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Retirees, this is your newsletter.  
If you have suggestions refer them  
to the Retiree Activities Office  
334-953-6725 or Marketing  
334-953-7410.

## Director's Letter

I'm Col. John Burch, USAF (ret), your Director of Retiree Activities Office (RAO) at Maxwell/Gunter AFB. Since our last newsletter, we have had several retirees or family members answer our call for volunteers to help answer the phone and provide answers to retiree questions. We also need volunteers on a periodic basis to prepare the newsletter and update our website. Whatever your interest, we have something productive for you to do. In your active duty life, your dedication made a difference. Whether you would like the routine of a regular office schedule or would rather be on our "on-call" list for special duties, you can still make a real difference as a RAO Volunteer. Watch for our recruiting booth in the BX foyer or give us a call at 334-953-6725. You can also e-mail us at [retireeactivities@maxwell.af.mil](mailto:retireeactivities@maxwell.af.mil).

## Volunteering in the Maxwell AFB Retiree Activities Office

Come on in and see what we are up to in the Maxwell Retiree Activities Office. Our office is operated 100% by retirees for retirees and their families. We are working hard on rejuvenating our programs to serve you better. Our new website, current newsletters, active volunteer program, Retiree Appreciation Day, Retiree support at MPF Customer Service, Volunteering at Pass and ID are some of the programs that we have or are planning to implement. To make so many programs happen, we need lots of volunteer support. Come on in or give us a call, (334) 953-6725, to let us know what program you'd like to help out with or just give us ideas on other ways we can support our retirees.

Volunteering on base offers many benefits. Volunteer parking passes, discounts on meals at the club, discounted or free golf, gift certificate drawings are only some of the benefits available to volunteers.



## Updating Your Address

With monthly retirement payments being direct deposited into your bank account, it is easy to forget to keep your mailing address current. However, your annual pay statement, any personnel paperwork and even your Retiree Newsletters are sent to the address in the DFAS and DEERS systems. The Maxwell Retiree Activities Office can not update your address in your official files. Address changes must be made at your local MPF and Finance Customer Service, or you can call DFAS at 1-800-538-9552 or commercial at (216) 522-5534/5955 or better yet, enroll in myPay, <https://myPay.dfas.mil>, for quick and easy updates. For DEERS address changes, contact 1-800-368-4416.

# TRICARE Retail Pharmacy Program Resolving Initial Concerns

System improvements continue daily and until all system errors and "time-outs" within the communications infrastructure are resolved, the TRICARE Management Activity will provide updates on its website on a 72-hour basis. That's the word from TRICARE officials commenting on the new TRICARE Retail Pharmacy program, which began nationwide operations with Express Scripts Inc. (ESI), St. Louis, Mo., on June 1. Within hours, significant problems arose for all ESI customer accounts, including TRICARE beneficiaries. The immediate and comprehensive efforts expended by ESI, private sector consultants, and TRICARE experts resulted in restoration of commercial customer business and improvements for TRICARE beneficiaries.

TRICARE and ESI expect that as initial prescription submission throughput improves, the

program will stabilize and reach a steady and continuing pace. On June 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>, more than 180,000 claims were processed and paid each day. These numbers significantly exceed the standard of 125,000 TRICARE claims usually processed and paid on Mondays and Tuesdays. Nevertheless, higher than normal rates of claims rejection continue and problems exist in some areas. The ESI provider-relations team is working with individual pharmacies and pharmacy chains alike to resolve both systems problems and the particular problems experienced by those pharmacies.

Beneficiaries who experience difficulty with their prescriptions during this initial period may contact the TRICARE Retail Pharmacy (TRRx) Customer Service Center at (866) 363-8779.

## Medicare Prescription Drug Benefits Number One Question

The number one question asked by members of the military retiree community concerning the "Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement and Modernization Act of 2003," has been: How does it affect my pharmacy benefits? The simple answer is that for most uniformed services beneficiaries, it doesn't.

For older Americans, the most significant aspect of the new bill signed into law by President Bush on December 8 is the fact that it introduces an outpatient prescription drug benefit. However, the TRICARE pharmacy benefits will continue as a separate program. On the other hand, uniformed services beneficiaries should be aware of the provision as it could come into play in the future if they lose their TRICARE eligibility. Example: eligibility is lost when a member's widow or widower remarries a person who is not entitled to TRICARE benefits.

Since TRICARE provides excellent coverage and wide availability of services, it is unlikely that the vast majority of uniformed services beneficiaries will find it advantageous to enroll in the new Medicare pharmacy benefit. Obtain more details by calling 866-363-8779, or by going online at <http://www.tricare.osd.mil>.



## New "PharmASSIST" Takes Effect at Maxwell MTF

Effective July 12, 2004, Maxwell's pharmacy started following an Air Force-wide upgrade by making major renovations to equipment used to fill and verify prescriptions. The newly installed system is the "PharmASSIST Enterprise System," and it is a prescription dispensing and checking system consisting of software, digital imagery, scanning, workstations, auto-filling dispensers and robotic units. PharmASSIST is designed to improve patient safety; thereby allowing pharmacy staff to provide enhanced patient care.

Based on inputs from other Air Force medical clinics that have already installed PharmASSIST, we anticipate some longer wait times in the short term until the pharmacy staff becomes fully trained and accustomed to the system. However, the upgrade will incorporate the latest state-of-the-art technology to improve overall patient safety. 42MDSS/SGSAP POC is Major Patricia K. Welch at 334-953-6601.



# Students and the Commissary: A Winning Team!

The Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA) has solved two big problems with the start of a new hiring program. The problems, not necessarily in order of importance, were: young students in need of money but without a job; and DeCA in need of smart, hard-working, part time store workers.

The solution: DeCA initiated a student-hire program which is working very well, according to Brant Smith, the human resources specialist who manages the program from DeCA's Headquarters at Fort Lee, Va., "young adults get real world experience and learn about the grocery business as well as make a little money. Our agency gets great young people to help out in our stores. DeCA wins; the students win."

The student hire program was initially devised as a way to bring in students to entry-level positions so that the commissary could grow their own. This, coupled with the fact that students could be hired at the GS-01 level, seemed to be the perfect marriage for students and the commissary.

The DeCA student employment programs provide our young adults with a solid introduction to the real world of business. The Defense Commissary Agency also has an intern program for employees who are currently working in the commissaries.

Graduates of the DeCA intern program benefit from a structured and broad-based program of training and experience that prepares them for future leadership positions.

You can find information on the DeCa website at <http://www.commissaries.com>. Students can also visit the nearest commissary and talk with the store director about either student employment program.



## *Officials Work to Transform Personnel, Pay Services*

Personnel and pay officials are working together to transform the way the Air Force delivers these services to customers by offering an "e-business" approach to Internet users. People who have Internet access will have more control over routine personnel and pay transactions, at any time, as opposed to traveling to a nearby base and waiting for the service in an office, said officials from the Air Force Director of Personnel's staff. They understand there are likely to be apprehensive feelings associated with change, and that many retirees don't have access to a computer or the Internet.

For retirees who do not have access to the Internet, the Air Force will keep and expand its contact center to handle inquiries and request over the phone. The Air Force Customer Service Contact Center offers all customers a single toll-free number to call for all personnel and pay-related requests at (800) 616-3775.



## Computer Classes FREE for Retirees

6-7 p.m.



September 7 - Surfing the Web  
September 9 - Word

Although our past classes have proved very helpful and classes have been booked full (12 individuals per class), our attendance rate has been only fifty percent. We need our retirees and dependents to attend classes when scheduled. Basic typing skills, knowledge of the computer keyboard (location of keys on the keyboard), and the use of the mouse (right, left and double clicks) would greatly enhance your participation. Should anyone lack these basic skills, call 953-6725 and we'll send you a copy of the computer keyboard layout and a web address that offers a tutorial.

Maxwell Bowling Center

# ALL SUMMER!

## All you can Bowl!

**Mondays and Tuesdays;  
5-8 p.m.**

**NEW!**  
Now 2 Nights  
only \$5 a night



also...

**Now through August 31  
only \$20 for  
4 GAMES, 4 pairs of Shoes, 4 MEALS**

Meals include 4 medium sodas and your choice of one single top pizza or 4 burgers with fries or 4 hot dogs with fries.

## Advance Space A Lodging Gets Better With Policy Change

Reservations up to 30 days in advance are possible under a new change in the Air Force Space A Lodging policy. Art Myers, Director of Air Force Services, announced the change recently while addressing members of the Air Force Retiree Council during the annual meeting at Randolph AFB, Texas. He explained that the policy change, long backed by the Council, is effective immediately. Lodging managers at each base may accept and confirm reservations for Priority 2 (Space Available) up to 30 days in advance of the arrival date, for up to three-night accommodations, space permitting based on actual and projected occupancy.

Priority 1 customers will not "bump" Priority 2 customers with confirmed reservations, nor will they bump them once they are assigned quarters for a specific period of time. An exception to this would be in times of contingency, emergency, or when the installation commander determines higher priority exists.

Members of the retiree community should note that installation commanders may establish a policy limiting the number of days Space "A" guests may stay in on-base lodging to no more than 30 days a year.



## Cash Drawing *at the Clubs*

### Members Number CASH Drawing!

**Drawing Every FRIDAY at 6 p.m. in the main bar**  
 • Must be present to win! • Jackpots starting at \$250

**Jackpot increases \$25 every week until we have a winner!**



## Annuity Benefit for Certain Military Surviving Spouses

A small Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) annuity of \$192.32 per month may be payable to qualified surviving spouses of members of the Uniformed Service who:

- ✓ Retired from active duty prior to September 21, 1972 and died before March 21, 1974
- ✓ Members of a Reserve component of the Armed Forces who had received their 20-year letter (qualified for retired pay, but for the fact that they were under 60 years of age) and died before October 1, 1978

A qualified surviving spouse for purposes of this benefit is one who:

- ✓ Was legally married to the member on the date of death and was married to the member at the time of the member's retirement; or if married to the member after retirement, was married to the member for at least 1 year before the date of death; or was the parent of a child born of the marriage to the member
- ✓ Has never remarried.

A "DD Form 2769," Application for Annuity, Certain Military Surviving Spouses has to be submitted with proper documentation which includes:

- ✓ A certified true copy of the marriage certificate to the deceased member
- ✓ A certified true copy of the deceased member's death certificate
- ✓ A copy of the deceased retiree's final DD Form 214 (Certificate of Discharge), or a copy of a retirement order or copy of Notice of Retirement Eligibility, or other official service document showing the deceased member's retired status four other documents the applicant may feel pertinent

The amount of the annuity payable will be reduced by any amount paid to that surviving spouse for the same period under the following:

- ✓ Minimum Income Widow's Allowance
- ✓ Retired Serviceman's Family Protection Plan or Survivor Benefit Plan annuity based on the military service of this or any other deceased retiree
- ✓ Dependency Indemnity Compensation from the VA.



Maxwell & Gunter  
**Information  
Tickets  
& Travel**

*Join Us...*

**Shop 'til You Drop**

**Saturday Shopping Trips**

**\$20**

**Per Person**

*Price includes :  
round-trip bus trip  
and service  
of a guide.*

## 2004 Schedule ...

August 14 . Foley Riviera Outlet  
September 11 Atlanta Antiques Flea Market  
October 9 Silver Sands Designer Outlet  
November 13 Foley Riviera Outlet  
December 11 Silver Sands Designer Outlet

**For More Information: Call our ITT Office located in the Maxwell Mall, 204 E. Selfridge St., Maxwell AFB, AL 36112 or call 953-6351 today!**

## Maxwell And Gunter



## SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

**Woodworking Class**  
**Ceramics and Framing Classes**  
**Ballroom Dance Classes**  
**Scuba Diving Classes**

**For more information please call  
Maxwell Community Center  
at 953-7370.**

## Veterans Benefit Act of 2003 Affects Some Surviving Spouses

A recently passed law may provide income for thousands of unknowing spouses of military retirees and other veterans. Public Law 108-183, the Veterans Benefit Act of 2003 signed into law by President Bush on December 16, 2003; allowed survivors of members who died of service-connected causes to retain Dependent Indemnity Compensation (DIC) if they remarried after attaining age 57. Previously, surviving spouses lost this entitlement if they remarried at any age.

The only provision to regain the benefit was if the latter marriage ended in death or divorce. Also, those who have already remarried (and were age 57 or older when they did so) have until December 16, 2004 to apply for reinstatement of their DIC benefits. The current entitlement is \$967 a month. The application form is VA Form 21-686c, which is available on the web at <http://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/21-686c.pdf>. For further information, please call the VA at 1-800-827-1000.

## Civil Service Retirement May Affect CDP

An entry on the Defense Finance and Accounting Service web site answers the question asked by many retired members wanting to know if they qualify for Concurrent Disability Pay (CDP) although they waived their military retirement pay. The answer, according to DFAS officials, depends on the situation. If you have combined your military time with your civil service time in order to qualify for a Civil Service retirement, you are not eligible for CDP. On the other hand, if you combined your military time with your civil service time in order to enhance your civil service retirement, you may be eligible for CDP.

Officials point out, however, that those who are eligible will have to coordinate with the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to reverse the waiver of retired pay. It's important to note that by doing this, the retired member may incur a debt to the government resulting from an overpayment. Any decision to change the status of retired pay should be carefully considered.

The CDP law is applicable to retirees who have a VA-rated, service-connected disability of 50 percent or higher. Individuals who retired for disability rather than under the regular retirement law must have at least 20 years of service. You may call 1-800-321-1080 with questions or check the web at <http://www.dfas.mil/money/retired/cdpfaq.htm>.

**You could win  
\$2,300  
Jackpot**



## Maxwell Enlisted Club **BINGO Every Wednesday Night**

**Games start at 6PM - Cards go on sale at 5PM**

*Open to all ranks. Free admission to club members  
Non-club members admission is \$5.00*

## Services Mottos

A recent call from a retiree who asked the question, "What is the Air Force Motto?", prompted us to do a little research on the subject.

**Air Force:** "Uno Ab Alto" (One over All).

**Navy:** "Non sibi sed patriae!" (Not for self, but country).

**Marine Corp:** "Semper Fidelis" (Always Faithful).

**Army:** "This We'll Defend".

**Coast Guard:** "Semper Paratus" (Always Ready).

## KEY MAXWELL PHONE NUMBERS

AAFES (BX/PX) .....	(334) 834-5946
Casualty Affairs.....	(334) 953-5048
Commissary .....	(334) 953-7175
DEERS, Customer Support.....	(334) 953-6487
Finance, Customer Service .....	(334) 953-3288
Legal Office .....	(334) 953-2786
Pass and ID .....	(334) 953-4283
Retiree Activities.....	(334) 953-6725
Survivor Benefits .....	(334) 953-8472
TRICARE (Maxwell).....	(334) 953-7854
TRICARE INFO Line.....	1-800-333-5331
Veterans Affairs.....	(334) 242-5077
VA Hotline.....	1-800-820-1726

Cut out and save for future reference.



## Combat-Related Special Compensation Update

Certain disabled military retirees may be eligible for Combat-Related Special Compensation (CRSC) enacted by Congress in the FY 2003 Defense Authorization Act and modified in the FY 2004 Defense Authorization Act.

To be eligible, the military retiree must have at least 20 years of qualifying service (Reserve retirees must be age 60 or older and eligible to receive retired pay) and a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) disability rating of 10 percent or higher for illnesses or injuries attributed to combat situations, combat-oriented training, hazardous duty, or instrumentality of war. CRSC is not granted automatically.

Retirees who believe they are eligible must apply for the benefit. CRSC payments will equal the amount of VA compensation received for combat-related disabilities described previously minus any additional compensation received for dependents.

The new application is available at <http://www.dod.mil/prhome/docs/DD2860T.pdf>. Additional information is also available at 1-866-229-7074 or [www.randolph.af.mil/disability](http://www.randolph.af.mil/disability).

## Expired ID Cards

This notice is the result of a retiree complaint about being denied service at the Maxwell AFB Pharmacy due to an expired ID card. Although the front of the card shows "Expiration Date INDEF", retirees and dependents should check their ID cards (front and back) and ensure the card is current. If your ID card has expired or is nearing expiration (within 45 days), visit the Military Personnel Flight (Bldg 804) and get a new card. Call 334-953-6487 for additional information and assistance.

Articles appearing in this newsletter may have appeared in newsletters received by the RAO from other military facilities. They have been reprinted for your benefit. Some may have been reworded because we want to give the most current news and information. We would like to thank the other RAOs for sharing their newsletters. We have found each one has information that all retirees need to know.

**DISCLAIMER:** Opinions expressed by writers of this newsletter are their own and should not be construed to be the official position or policy of DoD, USAF, or Maxwell AFB AL. The RAO published this newsletter to inform AF retirees and their family members of changes in legislation, defense policies and other matters affecting their military rights, benefits and other obligations. It contains information about Maxwell AFB and the local retiree community. While every effort is made to verify information in this newsletter, the RAO "volunteer" staff cannot guarantee the accuracy of information furnished by outside agencies.

Maxwell Officers' Club

August 8th & 22d

## Champagne Sunday Brunch



10:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

**Members, \$12.95**

**Non-Members, \$14.95**

**Seniors, 65 and older**

(Members, \$10.95 Non-Members \$12.95)

**Children, 4-12, 55¢ x age**

## Requesting Records Online

The National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) now offers an online option for those requesting military records. Retirees, veterans and their next of kin can use this site to request records instead of the Standard Form 180. All others must still use the Standard Form 180. The NPRC anticipates that they will offer better service online by eliminating mailroom processing time and, through the use of online prompts, avoiding delays caused by incomplete applications. The website address is:

<http://vetrecs.archives.gov>.

## Concurrent Retirement and Disability Payments

While some retirees may be eligible for both CRDP and CRSC, they may not receive both CRDP and CRSC at the same time. If you're eligible for both (and have been approved for CRSC), the Defense Finance and Accounting Service's (DFAS) Cleveland Center is currently paying whichever benefit has the higher dollar entitlement. If DFAS announces any other options for retirees in this situation, we will publish the changes in the Retiree Newsletter, and they will announce the change on the website: <http://www.dfas.mil>.





Retiree and their spouse must show ID cards in order to participate in the festivities, however, their guest will be able to eat with them for \$4 per person. Retirees only may register for the prizes!

★ GAMES!

★ INFORMATION

★ GIVE-A-WAYS

★ FOOD

*FREE to Retirees!*

9 a.m. - 2 p.m.

September 24

Maxwell Community Center

42 MSS/CVR Building 804  
50 Lemay Plaza South  
Maxwell AFB, AL 36112-6010

First Class  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Permit # 700  
Montgomery, AL



Visit our new retiree website at: [www.maxwell.af.mil/42abw/rao/](http://www.maxwell.af.mil/42abw/rao/). Let us know what you think. Call Retiree Activities Office at 334-953-6725 or Marketing & Publicity at 334-953-7410 regarding this newsletter.